

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASH DC 338

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ECON, SE

SUBJECT: THIRD SESSION OF SEYCHELLES NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

1. SEYCHELLES' NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONVENED APRIL 26-27 IN THIRD TWO-DAY MEETING SINCE JUNE 1976 INDEPENDENCE. ALTHOUGH PRIMARY PURPOSE FOR CALLING SESSION WAS ADOPTION OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (REPORTED SEPTEL) AND 8 MINOR GOVERNMENT BILLS, MOST OF 17 HOURS OF DEBATE CONCENTRATED ON 66 QUESTIONS AND MOTIONS PUT FORWARD BY ASSEMBLY'S 15 BACK-BENCH MEMBERS.

2. ALL QUESTIONS AND MOTIONS DEALT WITH DOMESTIC ISSUES, AND INDICATION OF ESSENTIALLY INTROSPECTIVE NATURE OF SEYCHELLOIS SOCIETY.

MOST QUESTIONS AND MOTIONS REFERRED TO FAMILIAR LOCAL PROBLEMS OF SHORTAGE OF ADEQUATE HOUSING, UNEMPLOYMENT, INFLATION, AND A RISING CRIME RATE. ACCORDING BACK-BENCH MP, QUESTIONS RELATING TO SEYCHELLES' ECONOMIC TIES WITH SOUTH AFRICA (WHICH, IN 1976, FURNISHED 20 PERCENT OF ALL TOURIST VISITORS AND WAS THIRD LEADING TRADING PARTNER) WAS WITHDRAWN. OTHER SOURCE REPORTS PRESIDENT MANCHAM DRAFTED VAGUELY-WORDED GOVERNMENT RESPONSE WHICH EMPHASIZED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEYCHELLES' GUIDING FOREIGN POLICY PRINCIPLE OF "FRIEND TO ALL, ENEMY TO NONE."

3. SHARP, WIDE-RANGING DEBATE WAS GENERATED BY CONSIDERATION OF MOTION QUESTIONING SOCIAL COST OF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES WHICH EMPHASIZED MASS TOURISM. MANY MEMBERS (INCLUDING 2 MINISTERS) URGED SLOW DOWN IN TOURISM EXPANSION. MOTION CALLING FOR

IMPRISONMENT OR EXPULSION OF SEYCHELLES' ESTIMATED 100 JEHOVAH'S
WITNESSES WAS ROUNDLY DEFEATED AS UNDEMOCRATIC.

4. AS WAS CASE PREVIOUSLY, THIRD SESSION WAS DOMINATED BY PRIME
MINISTER RENE, ASSEMBLY'S MOST ARTICULATE AND EFFECTIVE
PARLIAMENTARIAN. AS LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, RENE SKILLFULLY
STEERED LEGISLATION THROUGH COMMITTEE STAGE TO PASSAGE, KEPT MINISTERS

IN LINE AND PLAYED MEDIATING ROLE WHEN DEBATE TURNED VITRIOLIC.
AMONG MORE INTERESTING ASPECTS OF SESSION WAS EFFORT BY BACK-BENCH
MP'S OF BOTH PARTIES, MOST OF WHOM ARE NOMINATED MEMBERS, TO CREATE
FOLLOWING BY PLAYING TO THE GALLERY AND BUILD "MINISTERIAL" IMAGE
FOR TIME WHEN CABINET MAY BE RESHUFFLED.
MATTSON

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